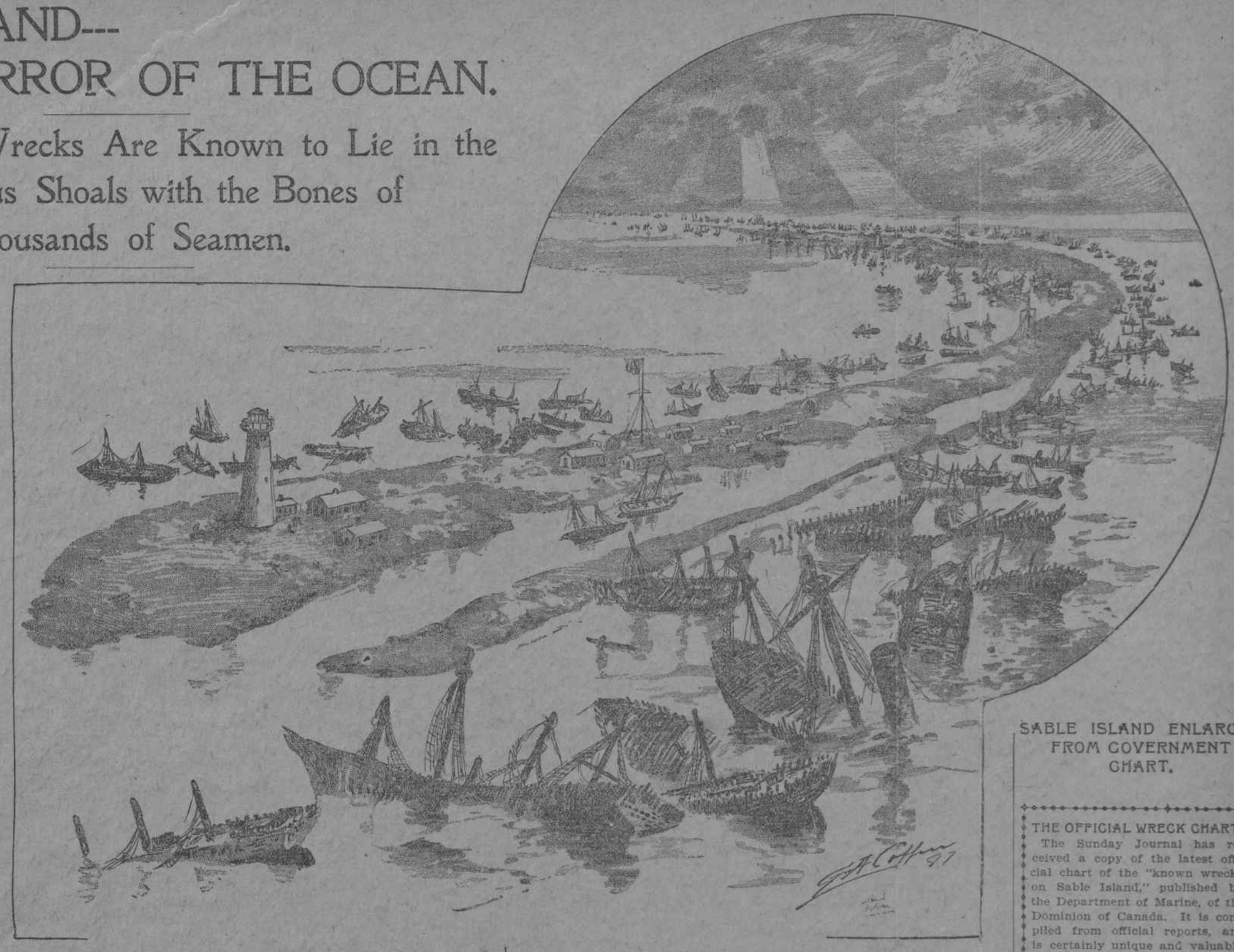
SHIFTING SABLE ISLAND--- WORST TERROR OF THE OCEAN.

Two Hundred Wrecks Are Known to Lie in the Treacherous Shoals with the Bones of Thousands of Seamen.



SABLE ISLAND ENLARGED FROM GOVERNMENT CHART.

SABLE ISLAND.

NINETY miles southeast of Cape Canso, off the Nova Scotian coast and directly in the path of ocean navigation, lies the only island in the world whose position on the chart is always wrong.

The surface of old ocean is studded with many a dangerous reef and ghastly pale green shoal, but the sailorman, with his compass and chart, can pick his way among them—

If they will hold their places!

That is just what this particular island will not do. It plots; it lays innumerable snares shrouded in fog; it warily shifts its position to entrap the mariner. Its shoals, like the tentacles of the devil fish, reach out under the sea to grasp the keels of ships.

The number of known wrecks it has caused is near two hundred. The unknown, who can estimate? The very bank that wrecks a ship in a Winter night's gale may be dispersed before the gale is done; and no trace left behind of ship or shoal.

It has been known as Sable Island for centuries, and black indeed is its record. The skipper who in thick fog or blinding storm thinks he has allowed a good offing for his ship suddenly finds himself in the breakers, his vessel a wreck. He has gone ashore on Sable Island, which in some unaccountable manner has moved from the position it occupied a short time before.

Several years ago two American fishing vessels were caught in one of those fierce storms that sweep all before them in the vicinity of the Nova Scotian coast and ran into what seemed a safe harbor of the island. The storm continued during the night and the darkness was so thick the lookouts could see nothing about them. By daylight the gale had blown itself out, but the light revealed to the astonished sailors the fact that what the previous day was a harbor or refuge had been transformed into a shallow lake thirteen miles long. The vessels were in the centre of the island, where their hulks have remained to this day.

To the captains of the ocean liners Sable Island is a nightmare that it is always possible may develop into a fact. No one can tell how greatly its position may have been altered by twenty-four hours of storm. The captains of fishing vessels look upon it with as great horror as the old-time mariners are said to have viewed the Flying Dutchman. It is the greatest derelict the ocean knows, and its course is influenced by no current. No mystery of the sea has ever been more puzzling than the movements of this remarkable section of land.

The main body of the island—at least that smaller part which has remained comparatively intact during the past few centuries—is about twenty-six miles in length, and about one in width. There are no trees, and the shrubbery is sparse and stunted. Broad expanses are covered with tall, rank grass of a deep-hued green.

From the crosstrees of the tall flagstaff at the headquarters station near the centre of the island a complete bird's-eye view is obtainable. The island spreads east and west in the form of a great bow. In the foreground the outpost men may be seen galloping their sturdy little ponies into headquarters, recalled by the signal flag overhead. On a distant hill is the West End House of Refuge, with bread, firewood, kettle and matches, and directions for finding water. Three or four miles down the lake in which the hulks of the American fishing vessels lie, is the south side station, with its house and barn, and flagstaff and boathouse. Nine miles further along is another relief house, and five miles further yet is the east end lookout, with its tiny buildings. Here and there along the wide beach lie huge heaps of wreckage, half buried in the shifting sand. The Glasgow's bow, the Maskonemet's stern, the East Boston's hulk and the grinning ribs of the well-fastened Guide, as well as parts of many another good ship, each with its tale of adventure, hardships passed and toil and suffering endured.

Herds of wild ponies dot the hills, and black ducks and sheldrakes in great numbers are heading their young broods on the mirror-like ponds. The whole picture is framed in a setting of ever-tumultuous surf.

Long spurs of shoal sand shoot far out to sea, like spokes to the hub of a wheel. It is impossible alike to either light or buoy them; they gather in many an unconcerned skipper, who fondly imagines that he is far away from such dangers. The loss of life in these instances is usually complete, and even the vessels' hulls are quickly swallowed up in the shifting sands. Many such a vessel has been lost with every soul on board, without even the life-savers upon the island being aware of it. The wreck chart is therefore totally inadequate. It only professes to portray the "known wrecks of Sable Island." No man can tell the number of the unknown. Sailormen in their expressive sea idiom frequently term the island the "dilly box of Davy Jones's locker." In other words the little place in which he carefully hides away his most valuable possessions.

It would be fruitless to attempt any account of the great wrecks. There have been too many of them. That of the steamship Georgia and the French frigate L'Africaine, however, are probably the ones best known to the public.

Sable Island is without any regular communication with the mainland. Two or three times a year the Canadian Government sends a steamer with provisions and stores for the lighthouse and patrolmen. Upon her return voyage she takes on board persons who have been wrecked and saved since a previous trip, as well as a number of the somewhat celebrated ponies which run wild upon the island. These ponies are much prized in England and Canada for polo use. They resemble the Mexican wild horses in their large heads, shaggy necks, sloping quarters, paddling gait and chestnut or piebald colors. They were originally placed upon the island a century or more ago, for edible purposes. Cattle and hogs had both been tried, but proved unable to live through the terrific wintry weather.

Many of these ponies are partly trained, and render communication with the distant parts of the island comparatively easy, but the bulk of them, to the number of about 400, run in gangs under the leadership of an old male, and many are the mortally waged battles between these aspirants to rulership.

Ever since the island was first sighted by John Cabot, the English navigator, in 1497, it has been the bugbear of Atlantic mariners, and it had no little to do with the dominancy of the British power in America. Several fleets of both France and Spain, intent upon rivalling their island opponents, were shattered and dispersed by it before they reached the haven of their desires.

In the year 1583 Sir Humphrey Gilbert's little fleet, upon their return voyage from Newfoundland, became entangled among the shoals of the island. On one of the previously described outlying bars the ship Delight struck heavily, and soon dashed herself to pieces. The officers and over a hundred men were lost. Fourteen of her crew, after drifting about in a pinnace for many days, were finally rescued. The other vessels, the Squirrel and Golden Hind, bore off to deeper water, but the Squirrel, a vessel of only about ten tons, was sorely tossed by the tempest, and finally sank with all on board, including Sir Humphrey Gilbert.

In the year 1598 the Marquis de la Roche was sent by Henri IV. to America with 200 convicts from the French prisons. He determined to found a settlement upon the island, and left forty of the convicts to commence the work. A storm severely shattering his ships, De la Roche was forced to return to France, thus abandoning these unfortunate colonists. Without food or clothing, they suffered intensely. Birds, eggs and cranberries were the only food obtainable, and without means of making a fire these made but indifferent victuals. When, seven years later, a ship was sent to their rescue, only twelve long-haired and bearded survivors were found.

THE OFFICIAL WRECK CHART.

The Sunday Journal has received a copy of the latest official chart of the "known wrecks on Sable Island," published by the Department of Marine, of the Dominion of Canada. It is compiled from official reports, and is certainly unique and valuable. The United States Hydrographic office possesses no such chart, and upon being informed of its existence the officials most eagerly expressed their intention of making a copy from the Sunday Journal's in the event of their being unable to obtain an original elsewhere.

England's Naval GOLIATH, The Powerful.

THE British war ship Powerful, the largest cruiser in the world, is being fitted out in England to make an ocean run against time. The indications all point to an attempt being made by the Powerful to wrest from the United States cruiser Columbia the record for speed for war ships for a transatlantic voyage.

It was on August 2, 1893, that the Columbia reached the port of New York after a passage of six days twenty-three hours and forty-nine minutes from Southampton. That time has never been beaten by any war ship afloat. The Columbia's orders were to use full natural draft power throughout the run, with the exception of the last twenty-four hours, when forced draft was to be employed. She failed to obey the latter injunction, her commanding officer reporting that owing to the cramped arrangements of the bunkers coal could not be supplied sufficiently fast to the furnaces. He also stated that the boilers were weakening so under the long run that the conditions would not warrant a further strain, even had the coal been available.

On the whole, the showing made by the Columbia was not deemed satisfactory. For a ship which had made over twenty-one knots on her trial trip her mean speed across the ocean of 18.41 knots per hour was far short of expectations. On that run the Columbia covered 3,109 miles. It was the longest high-speed passage ever attempted by a modern war ship. It is this run which stands to-day as the record.

It was never believed that British naval prestige would permit the Columbia's showing to go unchallenged. The Powerful, however, is the first ship England has possessed capable of a run against the Columbia. It has never been much of a secret that both the Powerful and her sister ship, the Terrible, were built by Great Britain to offset the two United States cruisers Columbia and Minneapolis. The latter two are known as commerce-destroyers. The Powerful and Terrible are sometimes referred to as "commerce-destroyer destroyers." It is to prove her ability to overhaul a vessel like the Columbia that the Powerful is now to be subjected to a long ocean run. Unless the plans change the test of the Powerful will be over the same course taken by the Columbia—Southampton to New York.

To understand the Powerful, it must be known that she has been built primarily for speed. Coupled with this she carries an enormous battery. She is over 530 feet long, and draws 27 feet of water. Her crew numbers nearly 850. There are only two ships afloat which are provided with larger engines than the Powerful, namely, the Transatlantic greyhounds Campania and Lucania. These latter vessels have engines of 30,000 horse-power. The engines of the Powerful are capable of developing nearly 26,000 horse-power.

The engines of the Columbia developed 18,500 horse-power. The American liner Paris has engines of 18,500 horse-power, and with this horse-power she held for many months the ocean record. The Powerful, it will be noted, has engines of about 7,500 horse-power in excess of the Paris. In size the Powerful displaces 14,500 tons. Should she enter the port of New York she will be the largest war ship ever seen in these water.

But the unique feature connected with the Powerful is her boilers. She is fitted with no less than forty-eight boilers of the Belleville type. These are watertube boilers, and are a distinct departure in war ship practice. On her boilers the Powerful's ability to break the Columbia's record depends. There is no question as to the machinery working properly. Marine engines are too thoroughly understood at the present day to cause any apprehension to arise from the engine-room. The whole question of success or failure lies in the boiler department and in the firing.

It was once said by Chief Engineer Sewall, of the Majestic, that he spent nearly all his time during a voyage in the fireroom. When queried as to whether the engines did not exact considerable of his time, he answered with a broad Scotch accent, "The engines look out for themselves; it is the firing, my boy, that does the work. It is the firing that does the work." Sewall wrested the ocean record from the City of Paris with the Majestic.

The Powerful is rated as being a 22-knot ship. The best naval opinion holds that if the Powerful's boilers can stand the strain of a long run she will be found doing a mean of 20 knots per hour across the ocean. This speed will place the Powerful second only to the Campania and Lucania. The Belleville boilers are French in design. The adoption of this type in the English navy met considerable opposition. For years the British Admiralty has been depending on what is known as the Scotch marine or cylindrical boiler. It is this latter style of boiler which is found on board the Columbia, and on the majority of the United States cruisers. So far as space is concerned, the Belleville boilers necessary to do a certain amount of work take up about as much room as would Scotch boilers, but owing to the single Belleville's being smaller, it is asserted that they can be worked into spaces, and made to accommodate themselves to the shape of the ship more easily than the large cylindrical boilers.

In the case of fast cruisers with very fine lines this is a matter of importance. In the saving of weight it is declared that the Belleville boilers in the Powerful are 700 tons less in weight than Scotch boilers necessary to do the same work. Other calculations, however, bring this saving in weight down to 400 tons. The total boiler weight aboard of the Powerful is 1,164 tons. The vessel is not fitted with forced draught and gets her power of 26,000 horses entirely by natural draught. The indicated horse-power per ton in boiler room of the Powerful is 22.24. Her indicated horse-power per square foot of grate surface is 11.8, and her heating surface per indicated horse-power, square foot, is 2.68. These are all natural draught figures.

In the matter of raising steam the British torpedo gunboat Sharpshooter, fitted for experimental purposes with Belleville boilers, has raised steam in twenty minutes from fires out and cold water. Scotch boilers would have required for this operation from two to three hours. To have attempted to have done it in less time with Scotch boilers would have resulted in leaks. A rapid raising of steam does not do injury to water tube boilers, nor does rapid cooling. With Scotch boilers a vessel has to be worked gradually up to her full speed, but with water tube boilers it is aimed to permit a large ship to start off almost like a torpedo boat.

It is reported of the Terrible, the sister ship of the Powerful, that on January 9 of this year she was lying in Plymouth Sound with her head to the eastward. At 8:25 a. m. she got under way, and had to turn round to get out by the western channel. At 9:08, that is to say in forty-three minutes, she was going twenty knots per hour. This performance could not have been approached had she been fitted with cylindrical boilers.

It is said of the Sharpshooter that recently, while lying at anchor, fires out, water in boilers cold, the fires were lighted and in fourteen minutes and forty seconds the steam gauges showed a pressure of sixty pounds. With this steam pressure the capstan engine was started, the cable hove short, and, finally, in thirty-five and one-half minutes from lighting fires the ship proceeded at full speed.

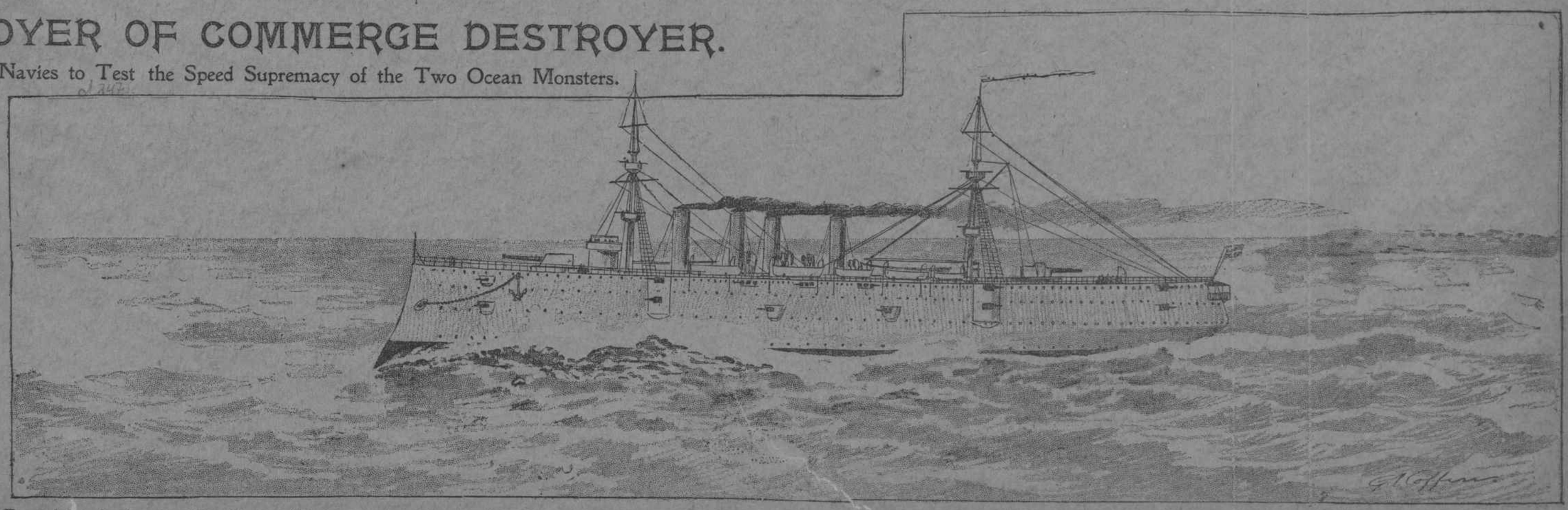
The case of the British cruiser Barham fitted with cylindrical boilers is a point at hand of the consequences of forcing fires. The Barham went on her full speed trial and made 19¾ knots. But the boilers had been forced, and before she could complete her four hours' trial they all leaked so badly that the ship was disabled, and drifted like a helpless log on the water until picked up by a friendly tug. The Barham is now being fitted with water tube boilers.

Aside from the interest which will attach to the ability of the Powerful to beat the Columbia, engineers the world over will be anxious to learn whether the eight tubular boilers are equal to the strain of a long high speed run. It means much to England's naval designers. In the United States navy tubular boilers have been placed on board the Monterey and on the new gunboat Nashville. The latter vessel is fitted with straight tube boilers of a pattern designed by Mr. Horace See. The trial results of the latter were excellent.

The run of the Powerful will be made at the close of the Jubilee ceremonies. The big ship will carry about 2,500 tons of coal. The Columbia on her run carried about 1,800 tons. The latter's consumption for two days was 200 tons per day, two days 250 tons per day, one day 230 tons, and one day 250 tons. The total amount of fuel consumed was 1,470½ tons. The engine room force of the Columbia numbered 199. This force was augmented by about 40 volunteers from the deck. The engine room complement of the Powerful is close to 300.

ROYER OF COMMERCE DESTROYER.

can Navies to Test the Speed Supremacy of the Two Ocean Monsters.



The Powerful, of the English Navy, (Twin to the Terrible, the Largest Armored Cruisers in the World) Which Will Soon Start Out and Try to Break the Record of the Columbia.